



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Description: The Purple Tiger is a predatory beetle, 12-16 mm in length, with long slender legs and a body that is iridescent purple on the top of the head, top and sides of the thorax, and on the elytra (wing covers); the elytra have white maculations, and the underside of the head and abdomen are iridescent, bluish-green. Tiger beetles are so named because of their “tiger-like” behavior of chasing down and capturing prey with their long mandibles.

Habitat: The Purple Tiger Beetle is most frequently associated with semi-compact, sandy loam soils along farm roads, grass strip runways, or open roads on earthen dams. In Massachusetts it primarily inhabits sandplain grasslands and heathlands, and grass or heath openings in pitch pine-scrub oak barrens. Larvae occur in sparsely vegetated areas with a grass or heath composition.

Life History: The Purple Tiger Beetle has a two-year life cycle. Adult beetles emerge in late August and September, entering diapause by October and overwintering. The adults are active again from early April through early June, when they mate and the females lay eggs. Eggs hatch soon after they are laid, and larvae feed until the fall and spend the first winter in larval diapause. Larvae resume feeding in the spring and complete development by late August or September.

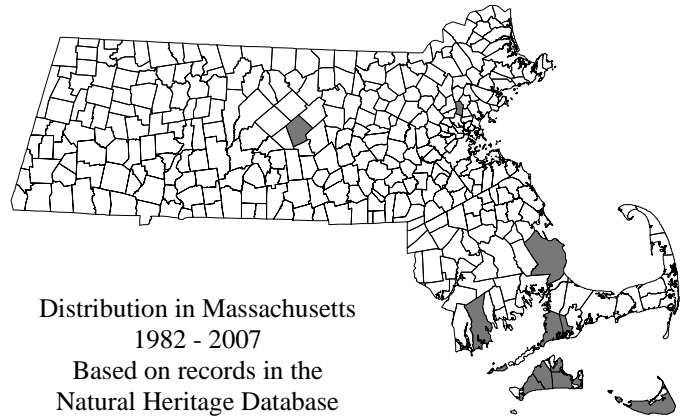
Range: The Purple Tiger Beetle is found from southeastern Canada south to Georgia, and west to British Columbia and California (Pearson et al. 2006). In Massachusetts, populations are currently concentrated in the southeastern part of the state and on the offshore islands.

Purple Tiger Beetle

Cicindela purpurea

State Status: **Special Concern**

Federal Status: None



Adult Activity Period in Massachusetts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Historically there were more than 50 populations in other parts of the state, and the decline of this species during the past 50 years is probably a result of its affinity for agricultural habitats.

Threats

- Habitat loss
- Off-road vehicles
- Fire suppression
- Invasion by exotic plants
- Insecticide spraying

References

Pearson, D.L., Knisley, C.B., and C.J. Kazilek. 2006. *A Field Guide to the Tiger Beetles of the United States and Canada*. Oxford University Press, New York, New York.